

# Spanish Language

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Mary Hartley



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CATHERWOOD

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LINCOLN NATIONAL  
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# Spanish Peggy





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YOUNG LINCOLN AT THE COOPER'S SHOP

# Spanish Peggy

A STORY OF YOUNG

ILLINOIS

BY

MARY HARTWELL CATHERWOOD



HERBERT S. STONE & CO.

CHICAGO & NEW YORK 1899

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TO SUE

THE DEAR YOUNG SECRETARY WHO GATHERED THE MATERIAL,  
AND HELPED ME MAKE THIS STORY



*The ridge on which New Salem stood has not now one log upon another. The trees, the grass, the sky, old witnesses of old doings, are there, as they were in Abraham Lincoln's day; but the swarming village life is gone.*

*However, open your eyes: look carefully, and you may see on that ridge and its environment this story lived again.*





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## SPANISH PEGGY

### II

**A**BRAHAM LINCOLN lay stretched on his stomach, his head supported by his hands, facing the cooper's fireplace. A blaze of shavings and blocks lighted cobwebby beams overhead, clean staves and hoop-poles standing around the wall, the cooper's work-bench and tools, and the lank, aguish face of a man who sat on a keg beside the hearth, holding a book from which the young student recited. The shop had part of a log left out in the side, filled, like all New Salem windows, with oiled paper instead of glass. Outer darkness made this a blurred oblong framed by logs.

People knew that the cooper let young Lincoln turn his shop into a study an hour or two every evening, and no one before this night had come picking at the latch.

"The string's pulled in, Minter," said Lincoln, turning his head, as suppressed laughter and a shuffle of feet on the log step disturbed his recitation. "Never mind the boys; they'll go away pretty soon."

"Maybe the Grove fellows have come to town," said the aguish young man on the keg, listening anxiously. "They'd as lief break in the cooper's paper as not."

"I reckon we'd better hurry, anyway," urged the

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student, and he continued repeating as rapidly as he could the remainder of the lesson.

Presently with a click the door turned back on its wooden hinges and bumped the wall.

"I know you, Slicky," declared the interrupted scholar without looking. "Come in. Folks wouldn't give you the name of Slicky Green if you hadn't a way of getting what you want." He scooped a double handful of blocks and shavings on the blaze, and, warned by some unusual restraint at the door, hastily drew up his length before the fire. It showed him a slim giant in blue homespun trousers, which did not quite cover his ankles, and an open roundabout hanging loosely from the shoulders, and betraying the fact that his vest was buttoned crooked. Seeing a stranger on the threshold with the boy he called Slicky, Lincoln ran his hand through his dark hair, leaving it tossed in every direction.

"How did you know I was home from college, Abe? Dick and I rode in from the farm on purpose to see you. This is Dick Yates, one of our boys from the Jacksonville school. Dick, this is Abe Lincoln."

"How do you do, Dick?" said Abe, offering his hand.

"How do you do, Abe?" said Dick, seizing it.

"And here's our schoolmaster, Minter Grayham," continued Slicky, presenting the pale occupant of the keg. Minter rose with the dignity of a man who often pronounced words of five syllables. The mounting firelight found reflecting threads in Dick Yates's bright auburn hair. The schoolmaster thought him a beauti-

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ful young fellow, with modest manners. His features, perfectly modeled and rosy as a girl's, were manly, from full forehead to outstanding chin. Though of a robust, well-knit figure for a lad of eighteen, his head barely reached Lincoln's shoulder as the two stood looking at each other.

"I've been telling Dick so much about you, Abe, that he wanted to see you," said Slicky.

Abe blushed and Dick blushed, with eager friendliness and recognition of power.

"Are you studying Blackstone?" inquired Dick, indicating the huge book which Minter Grayham held closed.

"Yes. It's mighty interesting reading to me."

"I'm going to study law, too. But it scares me to death to begin a debate; and Slicky says you make a fine speech."

"If I ever met you as an opponent, I'd want some advantage. S'pose we make a compact to work together on our first case?"

"Done!" said Yates. "It's as good as won."

"William Green!" spoke a girl's voice from the humid spring darkness outside; "have you forgot how bad the wolves are in the timber we have to ride through?"

"Come in, girls!" exclaimed the proprietor of the rough study. His tutor echoed the invitation. "It's Abe's recess. Come in, Nancy and Ann Rutledge, and the rest of you."

Half a dozen figures emerged from the night of the village street, bearing Nancy Green company, laughing

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and half reluctant; and let themselves be coaxed into sharing a long bench which the boys drew up before the fire. It was like an invasion of swallows. Abe raked up all the shavings and blocks and brought them to the hearth. A festive spirit filled the place. Nearly all the girls were bareheaded, in linsey dresses. They had stepped out of their homes along the winding road for the mere pleasure of being abroad and free from tasks at the end of the day; with the exception of Nancy Green, and Martha Bell Clary, who had come from Clary's Grove to stay all night with Mahala Cameron. A similar group of young people in a French cabin would have cleared the floor directly for dancing, all the merrier for having met unexpectedly. But these children of serious Massachusetts, Tennessee, Carolina, and Kentucky pioneers held experience meeting instead. The state was still so young, and their knowledge of the wide world so limited, that they and their elders took primitive delight in telling over their own adventures. The oftener a story was repeated the more dignity it acquired.

"Talking about wolves," said young Green, when nobody had said a word about wolves since the girls' entrance, looking at his sister with sly enjoyment, "I was going afoot to the mill early one morning last summer, and met two in the path—a black one and a gray one. I stood still and looked at them, and they stood still and looked at me. I knew if I turned to run they would pull me down in a minute. Finally I whipped out my jack-knife and cut a rosin-weed, and lashed at

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them, yelling with all my might. They were so scared they ran like sheep."

"Or like that wagon that you stopped before we came to Illinois," retorted his sister Nancy. "When daddy was going to move from Car'lina he bought a new wagon. We children had never seen such a thing, and we climbed the spokes, and William took hold of the chain on the tongue. The wagon started down hill, and everybody let go but William. The tongue ran into a tree and broke, and left the chain in his hand. 'I was going to hold on if it killed me, mother,' says he. 'For if that wagon had got away, how were we going to move out to the Illinois?'"

"Speaking about sheep," continued young Green, as if he had not heard the wagon story, "daddy told Nancy when she was herding the sheep, that she must carry a bag with her and save the wool that stuck to the bushes. Our old ewe was tame, and it was easier to pick the wool off her back than to hunt through the bushes. So Nancy picked the old ewe, and came home with a full poke two nights hand running. The first night daddy praised her; but the second night he found it out!"

"I wasn't ten years old then," remembered Nancy; "and my conscience hurt me worse the first night than daddy's punishment did the second."

"That reminds me, Nancy," said Lincoln, "of what your mother told me Slicky did when he was about ten years old. He brought in some frozen eggs and raked out the coals and put the eggs to thaw on her best pewter

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platter. She said when she found the melted pewter running all over the hearth she felt discouraged about him!"

Ann Rutledge laughed, and flung one of her thick auburn braids behind her shoulder.

"Haven't you any tale to tell of Abe, Minter Grayham?"

Minter Grayham, used to having his name prolonged by the soft Southern drawl with gentle familiarity, smiled and shook his head. No one around the cooper's fire-place had a sense of the degradation of poverty or the triviality of any human experience. Life in New Salem was full of zest which they brought from Massachusetts, from Kentucky and Tennessee and Carolina mountains, and from good English ancestry; though it was merely the ordinary pioneer life of a young state.

As Abe cast on more fuel and the blaze flared higher, a scream like a rabbit's pierced the doorway, and something writhed over the step on the puncheon floor. A furious woman, the vision of a witch, with beard growing tufted on her long chin, whacked the writhing object with a crutch as hard as she could plant the blows. Ann Rutledge screamed.

"Hold on!" cried Lincoln in two or three long strides. "Don't do that!" He received on his arm the last stroke of the stick, which the woman carried with her as she ran from him.

"Oh, my dear!" said Ann, brushing shavings off a little girl whom she helped up from the floor, "are you hurt?"

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"Sally got me that time!" the child answered, hopping to balance herself, and laughing while tears ran down her cheeks. "She took my crutch from me so I couldn't run. But I saw this door open, and goody! I'm in!"

"And she was born a white woman!" cried Ann indignantly. "Sally Shickshack behaves like a savage! You would think she was the Indian and Shickshack the white."

"I'm nimbler than Sally when I have my crutch," laughed the child, still weeping through her laughter, and trying to swallow her sobs. Ann and Dick Yates helped her to the cooper's bench. Piteous and courageous as the little figure was, the other girls looked at her with disfavor, and one of the younger Rutledges whispered to Mahala Cameron that "a certain person was always tagging Ann," as if resenting interference with a sister's privilege.

"Never mind, Peggy," said Lincoln, cheerfully. "Sally will make a man of you if hard knocks can do it. Where are Shickshack and the boy?"

"They haven't come in from hunting yet."

"And Sally took the opportunity to enjoy herself."

He drew his own large bandanna handkerchief out of his pocket and kindly wiped the child's face. She hiccuped in her effort to control more tears, and smiled at him. Ann kept one arm around her, and brushed down the hair which straggled to her shoulders. Peggy had a colorless, aquiline face, and a prominent though tiny

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mouth, her short upper lip failing to quite conceal her teeth. Her dress was of soft tanned deerskin, and showed by its lines that it had been cut out by a masculine knife instead of by feminine scissors. There was scarcely a fold to conceal her slim shape, and its scantiness displayed one moccasined foot hanging down. Her other foot was curled under the bench, while pointing straight at the fire was a wooden leg strapped to her knee. She tried with careful hands to spread the skin drapery over it.

Dick Yates could not help looking at her with curiosity. Even in that time when so many mixed elements went to the creating of a settlement, she was an unusual figure. Ann Rutledge, seeking on Peggy's head and back the welts left by the crutch, noticed the inquiry in his eye and answered it.

"She is not Sally Shickshack's child, or Shickshack's, either. They have been in New Salem only a little while. He is a Sac Indian, and likes to live among white men. His white wife you saw. She has a stepson, I think, a Canadian boy. There are four in the family. Shickshack and his wife have no children of their own, though people say she was married twice before. He is a good Indian."

The good Indian that moment appeared at the door with his wife's stepson behind him. That he had almost come upon his wife in the act of using the crutch was evident, for he carried the crutch in his hand, and had not yet unslung from his back a full game-bag. His gun he rested against the wall within the door.

"Come in, everybody," cried young Green. "All



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New Salem is on a frolic to-night. Sally has just been here enjoying herself, Shickshack, and we expected you and Antywine would follow."

The Indian with dignity stepped upon the puncheons, and as soon as he saw Peggy a look of satisfaction relieved the tension of his face. She sat still within Ann Rutledge's arm, but gave the men of her family an affectionate glance. Antywine, who had probably been christened Antoine, and was known to bear the name of La Chance, kept shyly in the background, lifting himself with a graceful spring to sit by the vise on the cooper's high work-bench. But Shickshack strode forward to sit in full council, as became his age and character, Minter Grayham hastily giving him the keg.

The blaze showed his moccasins roughened by much tramping, and his leggins, fringed down the outside seams. But Shickshack had compromised with the white man's dress by substituting a roundabout for a hunting-shirt. This was buttoned around the breech-cloth girding his waist, but stood open, showing his sinewy red neck at the top. He had also let his hair grow, and it made a black thatch upon his head.

Dick Yates gave Shickshack the grave salutation which he knew an Indian loved. The Sac fastened his eyes on Dick as the chief man at the fire, and the one for whom perhaps it had been kindled. Though his face did not betray it, he was pleased also to hear the young pale face talking to Peggy under the chatter of other voices.

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"You have as much spunk as a boy," approved Dick. "I like to see a little girl able to hush up crying."

"But I am not a little girl," said Peggy. "I am fifteen years old."

"Fifteen, Peggy! You can't be fifteen! I thought you were about ten."

"That's because I am so little for my age. And my name isn't really Peggy."

"They called you Peggy."

"That's because I have a peg leg. My own name is Consuelo Lorimer. And I have another that the Sacs called me."

Everybody who went to Minter Grayham's school-house, knew that her name was set down as Consuelo Lorimer on his book. It meant nothing in New Salem, but Yates heard it with quick interest.

"Was old Don Luis Lorimer, who used to be a Spanish governor down the river a long while ago, any relation of yours?"

Shickshack on his keg uttered so strong a grunt that all the others stopped talking and listened.

"The young chief knows a heap," said Shickshack.

"I only know there was such a governor, on old Spanish ground—part French himself, but his wife was pure Spanish. I've been to Cape Girardeau. But I don't know whether he has any living descendants or not."

"Last grandchild," said Shickshack, indicating Peggy. Her eyes moved apprehensively from white lad to Indian.

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"Then you're a Spaniard," said Dick.

"I'm not a Spaniard!" denied Peggy, facing down the accusation vehemently. "I'm white!"

"Spaniards are white."

"I'm white like folks in New Salem," insisted Peggy, repudiating the vague foreign taint. She saw the young Rutledges and Mahala Cameron and Martha Bell Clary looking at her suspiciously. Spanish governors cut no figure in the imagination of New Salemites.

"I suppose you are of mixed blood and really ought to be called a Creole," pursued Dick, interested in the case.

"That's a kind of a pullet," whispered Martha Bell to Mahala.

"I'm not of mixed blood!" cried Peggy, unable to bear any more.

"Why, everybody here is of mixed blood!" asserted Dick, and that was a comfort. It gave her the chance to look back at her antagonists.

"Have you never told her that she was Spanish?" Dick inquired of Shickshack.

The silent Indian shook his head. His impassive face glowed in the firelight. Young Yates seemed to have cast a spell on him. From the contents of his heavy game-bag, which he had unslung as he entered and left beside his gun, to the secrets of his past, he was ready to lay everything he owned at the young chief's feet.

"How did the Sac brave come to adopt the Spanish child?" inquired Dick.

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Shickshack silently admired his knowledge of how to address a Sac brave without offensively shouting out that brave's name in public.

"No father. No mother. Me hunt with her father on the Platte. Me love white men since that time. Never in my life me shed white man's blood. When he die he give his child to me."

"Was Peggy lame from the first?" inquired Ann.

Shickshack looked at her steadily without replying. Then he shook his head.

"Me love white men. Me marry white woman," he answered; and dropped his face.

"Does he mean that Sally lamed her?" whispered Ann to Lincoln.

"Sally is a mighty energetic woman," admitted Lincoln, smiling from the hearth corner. A huge mole showed in the crease made under his cheek by a smile.

"Will the young chief be here to-morrow?" Shickshack asked Dick Yates.

"No. We must go back to Jacksonville to-morrow."

Slicky Green added that it was not vacation time. The two had begged a day off on account of his extreme homesickness, and would have to ride early next morning.

"Me like to talk," said the Sac, fixing his gaze on Dick. "Me have something for the young chief's ear."

"We can take a walk together now," suggested Dick.

Shickshack rose up at once. The sheath of a long hunting-knife hung down his side by a leather strap. He had kept Peggy's crutch in his hand. He stood it

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against the wall beside the chimney, and Dick stepped over the bench to follow him.

"Hello!" shouted a cheerful voice. Two horses were brought up abreast, facing the door, their hoofs at the very step. Light shone out over them and their riders, revealing the weekly mail-carrier with the post-bag from Springfield bulging on each side of his saddle, and his leggins splashed with mud; and a stranger having black eyes and hair and mustache, whose entire equipment was foreign.

Shickshack stood while he drew one breath and looked at the stranger. For the first time a Sac war-whoop was heard in New Salem, and as he yelled he snatched his hunting-knife from its sheath.

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THE whole village knew before bedtime how Shickshack had threatened the stranger. A community of interest as swift as the telephone carried news the length of the winding street.

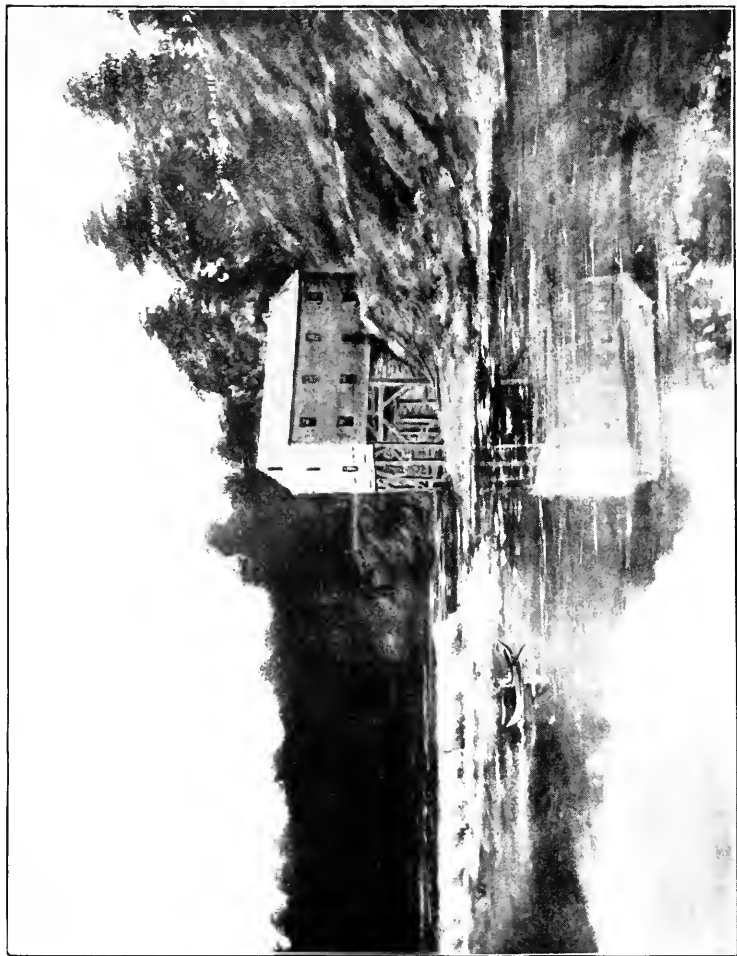
"Shickshack screeched loud enough to be heard at Wolf," gasped Mahala Cameron, telling the tale to her folks, "and drew his knife and jumped at the man like a wildcat!"

"And Abe Lincoln and the other boys caught him," put in Martha Bell Clary, assisting her. "The man's horse and the mail-carrier's horse both reared up—they were scared nearly to death like the rest of us! But just as soon as the boys caught hold of Shickshack he dropped his head and stood like he was ashamed."

"He's a live Indian yet," said Mahala Cameron's father. "He'll stir himself and take a scalp one of these days. I wonder what he had against the stranger?"

Rutledge's tavern entertained rare travelers who stayed over night in New Salem. The candles were all put out early, yet before folks covered their fires they had in some way absorbed the facts about the new arrival. He was a well-spoken man, with a foreign twist to his tongue, inclined to laugh at the rage of Shickshack, whom he knew very well. He told openly that





THE OLD MILL AT NEW SALEM

From a painting by Mrs. Bennett



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he was Don Pedro Lorimer, a sugar planter from the island of Cuba, and that his errand through the States was political in the main; though he intended when other matters pressed him less, to remove his half wild young cousin, Consuelo Lorimer, from the care of the Indian, who had taken advantage of her father's death on the plains to adopt her.

A tropical sun had given him the darkest skin ever carried by a white man around New Salem. He walked abroad in the early morning; and having had Shickshack's closed house pointed out to him, stood and looked at it smiling, without attempting to enter.

The Indian and his adopted daughter were not seen abroad during that day, though both of them were accustomed to live outdoors at all seasons. Shickshack said he loved to see the deer galloping in the bottoms, or to watch them as they gathered in herds, the sun shining in their eyes.

New Salem was a single long and winding street on a high ridge, which sloped so suddenly on both sides that all the gardens ran down hill. Seen from the schoolhouse, it looked like a huge wave of earth riding against the northern horizon. The schoolhouse, standing at the base of another ridge, was divided from the village by a deep ravine, through which ran a small stream called Rock Creek.

The schoolhouse was the only meeting-place. Its log stack and white clay chimney represented church, town hall, and theater—if so godless a place as a theater had

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been allowed—in New Salem. It was headquarters on muster days, and the arena of those wordy wars which the pioneers called debates. Eager to hear any strange, new thing, the whole town flocked across Rock Creek as soon as candles began to bloom like primroses at dusk in boot-shaped sconces on the schoolhouse walls. It might be that the cousin of Shickshack's girl had not as much to say as he had given out that he had. But New Salem would hear him and judge. Minter Grayham's pupils—particularly the smaller ones—were lined up on front benches, which their own long use had worn to the smoothness of glass. The stranger had advertised through their schoolmaster that he would give the prize of a book to any boy or girl who could, at the close of the lecture, stand up and spell correctly the word Ompompanoosuck!

Unusual war had raged on the playground at both recesses and noon concerning the spelling of this word. Camps divided to play Indian or Horsethief met to wrangle over combinations of letters. Some sly ones who thought they were going to get the prize, retired to puzzle alone. Minter Grayham, who taught a modest amount of spelling, the Testament, the English Reader, and the Rule of Three in arithmetic to advanced scholars, was in honor obliged to look as ignorant as he felt in this great matter.

Some women saw with consternation that the boys from Clary's Grove were gathered on the back seats, a couple of dozen young villains, whose leader, Redmond





DON PEDRO LORIMER AT THE SCHOOLHOUSE

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Clary, was the most desperate rider in the Sangamon country. The gravest charge brought against these uncurbed youths was their determination to govern the community. In them the life of the frontier found its wildest expression. When one of them had a colt to break, he summoned the others, and they forced it into the Sangamon River. One sat on its back, another hung to its tail, and the rest clung about and hampered it in every way. The untamed thing, obliged to swim for its life carrying weight, finally came out of the water a subdued beast. They were ready to deal in like manner with anything that antagonized them. Each man had brought an egg carefully bestowed on his person, and at a concerted signal he expected to throw it at the lecturer, for the mere sport of seeing an uninteresting foreigner smeared from head to foot. But he caught their fancy.

Don Pedro Lorimer, smiling on the plain men and women of New Salem, told them he was traveling through the States to urge everywhere the annexation of Cuba. He described the tropical luxuriance of Cuba, and its relative position to the continent; and some of his hearers learned for the first time that there was such a place. He told how planters were made to suffer in estate by unjust tyranny of a dominating European power. Some like himself had even been driven into exile, with only a remnant of their once large fortunes. So bad was the government that people starved there in the midst of abundance. He begged to have Cuba admitted into the Union. Such a novel plea had never been urged before

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upon men who were struggling to get a living out of the scarcely upturned sod of a new State.

Some older men smiled at each other, thinking the United States had all she could do at that time to take care of her own territory. But it was flattering to have a rich island, represented by an elegant man of the world dressed in the best clothes which money could buy, appealing to them for protection; and they helped their neighbors stamp vigorous applause every time he rounded one of his glowing periods with—"If Cuba may only be annexed to America!"

Still there was a hard-headed element that held out against the stranger. They would give him fair play, but they would test his arguments.

"Look at Abe Lincoln," one Carolina settler whispered to another during the stir which followed the conclusion. "I'd like to hear what he thinks. He can beat this fellow all hollow making a speech."

"Abe says the fellow looks just like gamblers he saw in New Orleans when he went down with the flatboat."

"I allow," said a third Carolinian, "and I have been watching him close, that this brown gentleman, with his shiny hair and eyes, is a runaway slave putting on a bold face and trying to get through to Canada. Some body-servant that knows how to wear his master's clothes."

"What spite would Shickshack have against a runaway slave?" objected the first man. "And his hair is as straight as that little girl's at the In'ian's cabin. I'd

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sooner take him for a horsethief. We've had some fine looking horsethieves in this part of the state."

Mahala Cameron's father, who, on account of building the mill, had claimed and obtained the privilege of naming the town, and had called it New Salem for old Salem where he was born on the Massachusetts coast, put in his word.

"I had an uncle," he said, "that followed the sea, and made voyages to Cuba. It's about such a place as the man describes."

While private opinion thus see-sawed, the row of Minter Grayham's pupils on the front benches, roused from drowsiness to keen interest, stood up at the stranger's bidding, and accumulated the worst kind of a case against him. For however they attempted Ompompanoosuck—

"O-w-m, owm ; p-o-w-m, powm—"

"A-u-m, aum ; p-a-u-m, paum—"

"O-m, om ; p-o-m, pom ; p-y, py, ompompy—" it was not right ; and the audience began to laugh with appreciation of a joke. Martha Bell Clary heard her own brother Redmond shouting with such delight as she struggled hopelessly with Ompompanoosuck, that she turned and made what was called in New Salem "a mouth" at him. Though the lecturer endeared himself greatly to the Grove boys, it was plain he had only put up Minter Grayham's scholars to be made ridiculous before their parents and friends.

"I'd hate to have him for a relation, even if I was as

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bad off as Peggy Shickshack," whispered Martha Bell to Mahala Cameron.

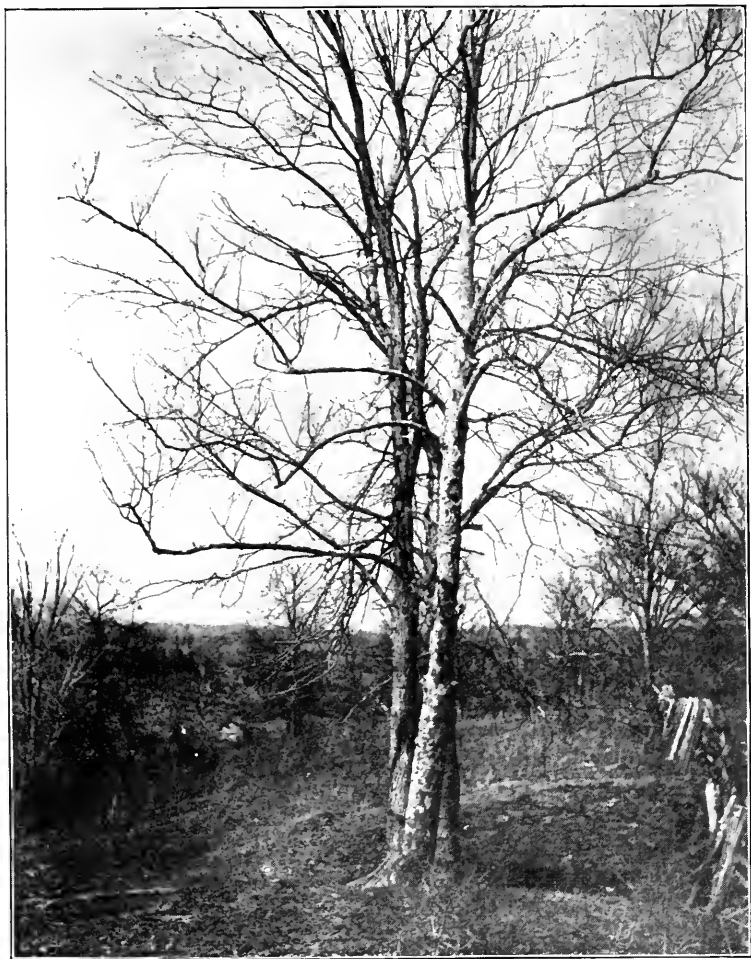
"So would I," responded Mahala. "I don't believe he has any book to give as a prize. And I don't believe he has any plantation in Cuba, either."

Shickshack's wife came in late, and sat by the school-house door, looking steadily at the speaker. It was the first time the village had ever seen her at any meeting. The women nearest were more occupied in being repelled by her than they were with the annexation of Cuba. It surprised nobody that she should come out to hear Shickshack's enemy. But it surprised some who departed slowly after the dismissal that she had a word or two, and touched hands with the stranger as he passed by her at the door. An unlovely nature had worked so long on features striking for angularity that she carried habitually a malignant look. The boys of New Salem liked to venture on Sally Shickshack's doorstep, or climb her garden fence, and have her chase them with gourds of hot water. Though she had been so short a time in the village, it was already known that Antywine La Chance, a former husband's son, had not inherited a fip'ny-bit of his father's property; and as a fip'ny-bit was smaller than the proverbial shilling with which heirs were sometimes cut off, it was plain Antywine La Chance had been cheated by his stepmother.

Don Pedro Lorimer mounted his horse the following morning, and took the eastward-stretching road which separated north and south beside the Sangamon. He







THE OAK AND THE ELM AT NEW SALEM

Growing on the spot where Lincoln's store stood

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noddod to everybody he saw along the narrow street. His departure was as public as his errand had been, and a not unkindly feeling went with him and would welcome him again. For a man who traveled around at his own expense, without charging a price, to lecture on the annexation of Cuba, must be in earnest; and frontiersmen respected a person in earnest.

Lincoln usually closed his store soon after the village supper-time, in order to recite his daily lesson to Minter Grayham in the cooper-shop. Few customers were so belated as to need anything at the store when candles were lighted. Those who dropped in met to talk and whittle; and since the nightly study blaze had begun to show in the cooper-shop these gossips felt obliged to seek another rendezvous. The law student therefore found himself delayed by Shickshack, who entered with Antywine as he was about to blow out the lights.

"What shall I show you, Shickshack?" said Lincoln.

The Indian looked around at a country stock: barrels of New Orleans salt and sugar, and sacks of coffee; a few scant shelves of calico; hoes, rakes and shovels; a grand leghorn bonnet or two, of mighty brim and crown; threads, needles and pins; and all the simple necessities of people on the edge of civilization. He shook his head.

"Me want to talk. Shut the door."

Lincoln closed the door and sat down on the counter, drawing up his knees and encircling them with his arms in a favorite attitude for relaxing chat; motioning his

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visitors to make use of the same high bench. Shickshack got up and curled his legs under him Indian fashion, but Antywine remained standing by the door. Two candles on a high shelf at the rear cast swaying shadows of the white man and the red man and the crowded objects in the little store.

"I reckon all New Salem is talking to-night about the man you were going to kill when he came to town."

Shickshack glowered at his young counselor.

"Me wrong to give the war-cry. Me ought to keep still, and stab him in the dark! But when see that man me forget me Christian Indian!"

"The whoop might pass muster better than the stab among Christians," suggested Lincoln.

Shickshack fixed his restless black eyes like the eyes of a snapping-turtle on the rugged and sincere face before him.

"Pedro Lorimer is a bad white man. He not one of Don Luis' sons."

"He says he wants Cuba annexed to the United States. Is he a Cuban planter?"

The Sac uttered a contemptuous grunt.

"No! No planter. No Cuba. He is New Orleans man; gambler."

"I reckoned so," said Lincoln.

"Me live in my tribe's country, where the chief Black Hawk has his village. Pedro Lorimer come there and trouble me. If my tribe take my part, all the people who want their land will say, 'These Sacs are dangerous.

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Drive them out.' So Black Hawk say to me, 'You love white men: go to Belleville.' Me go to Belleville. Think me marry a white woman; she help. An Indian cannot get a very good white woman. But me see the Widow La Chance, and Antywine, her husband's son. Me getting old; and Antywine is young. He can take care of the child when me die. So year ago me marry the Widow La Chance. The first thing she hurt the child. And Antywine"—Shickshack uttered the words deliberately, turning his head toward the figure at the door—"he is nothing but a squaw!"

Antywine opened the door and went out, closing it behind him, and sitting down on the step.

"Pedro Lorimer follow to Belleville, and trouble me there. Me come away to New Salem. The moon has not changed four times since me come to New Salem; and he is here to trouble me again!"

"What does he want?" inquired Lincoln.

"He want the child's money."

"Has Peggy money? How much has she?"

The Indian held his hands less than a yard apart; the length of a full-grown rattlesnake.

"A snakeskin full of gold."

"What have you done with it?"

"Me hide it from my white woman and Pedro Lorimer. Sometimes me think she divide it with him, if he could help her get it. All day, all year, she want that money herself. But she take what is Antywine's, and was his father's, and give him nothing."

## Spanish Peggy

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"You have fed and clothed Peggy by your own labor."

"She is my adopted child. Me send her to white man's school, too. Me give the schoolmaster four dollars."

"You are a mighty good fellow!" said Lincoln. "But Pedro Lorimer is gone; so what troubles you now?"

"He come back. He would steal the child to make me give up her money as ransom. He would take her as far as New Orleans."

"Does he know what she has?"

"No. But he would rob her of the last piece and leave her to starve. He got much that belonged to her people."

"Have you put Peggy's money where he cannot find it?"

"It is in a safe place."

"Has he ever made any attempt to carry her off?"

"Me not let him make attempt. Me watch."

"As a relative, he might prove that he had a right to the guardianship if he were a fit person."

"What a white man want he can take from an Indian!"

"No, Shickshack, you stand your ground and fight him. If he troubles you again in this community count on me for all the help I can give. Every decent man in New Salem would take your part."

Shickshack's face relaxed from anxious sternness to satisfaction.

## Spanish Peggy

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"Such men as you and the young chief Yates and the chief Lorimer make an Indian want to live with white men."

The tavern directly across the street had its windows open to let in the soft spring night air. At intervals a chorus of bullfrogs came faintly across the dark from where the Sangamon, swelling with freshets, rose frothing yeastily toward its brim. As Peggy hopped on her crutch around the tavern she could see a white fog floating and changing over Rock Creek in the valley, like fairy linen spread to bleach by starlight. One of Rutledges' deerhounds loped up from the stable down the slope to bay at her, and recognizing the intruder, drew back at once with a greyhound's sensitive apology.

Near the east side of the house stood a log hand-mill, one end being firmly planted in the ground, the other hollowed by burning and scraping. The pestle, hanging from a long pole weighted like a well-sweep, was a knot of hard wood spiked with nails, and had a crossbar handle. In this primitive mortar parched corn could be readily pounded to meal. A deerskin was stretched and fastened snugly over the top to keep grains in when the mill was in use, and litter out when it stood idle. Peggy caught hold of the sweep and lifted herself to a seat on the hand-mill. She could see, through a deep embrasure of logs, the Rutledge family at home. The tavern windows were movable sashes, with the tough oiled paper like transparent skin laid firmly upon them. Part of a tree smouldered crimson without flame in the white

## Spanish Peggy

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clay chimney. Shickshack's wife never allowed more than one candle lighted in his house. Mrs. Rutledge drew tallow tapers out of candle molds and filled a six-branched candelabrum of old English silver. It stood on a table surrounded by the children at their tasks, and the father, reading a paper, brought in the weekly mail. The younger girls were sewing; Ann sat at her flax wheel.

"The Rutledge girls can't say I'm tagging anybody now, because I'm not tagging," breathed Peggy. "But goody! I can watch them through the window!"

The most desirable thing in the world was to be lovely. She looked at Ann Rutledge, to whom hearts were given on sight. An ungraceful movement seemed impossible to Ann. There was no angle in the lines of her tall, supple body. Her deep blue eyes sometimes turned golden in moments of happiness. Unconscious that any outsider watched her, she lifted them and smiled at darkness through the open window. The passes of her hands as she spun and the sweetness of life expressed in her face brought a sob up Peggy's throat.

"I'll never be like her," whispered Peggy. "I'm a peg-legged Spaniard, little for my age, and ugly. I can't spin. I can't sew. Sally says squaw clothes are good enough for me, and Shickshack has to cut them out, and we piece them together as well as we can. He's done it ever since we left his people and have had no Indian women to help us. I can't read like Ann Rutledge does. If I could even knit I could make stockings for Antywine and Shickshack. They are the only men in New



## Spanish Peggy

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Salem that have to keep on wearing neips wrapped around their ankles for stockings.”

She set her teeth together so the grating was audible. Something stirred behind her, like one of the hounds creeping near, but she paid no attention to it. A blanket dropped over her head.

Peggy fought it with both hands, hearing the crutch that had laid across her knees roll to the ground. This was the last sound she heard. Screaming and smothering in the muffling folds, she felt herself dragged off the hand-mill and carried away.

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### III

ANN RUTLEDGE heard through the open window Peggy's muffled cry and struggle, and ran to the door. By starlight it was barely possible to see a shadow fleeing from the hand-mill: but Antywine La Chance, in pursuit of it, passed across the bar of light, a lithe, long-bodied and long-limbed shape, his uncovered blond hair flying back from a face cut like the high-bred features of a French noble. He bounded by the hand-mill and crossed a fence at the foot of the garden.

When Antywine thought he was about to overtake the object down the ravine, a scamper of horse's hoofs sounded through the valley. Peggy's captor had left a horse ready for flight. Instead of making southeastward for the Rock Creek bridge and the road to Springfield, he rounded the bluff and the village, and was evidently striking toward Beardstown. The western continuation of New Salem street, stretching across the prairies until it met and curved with bluffs along the Sangamon, was the route to Beardstown, which stood at the junction of the Sangamon with the Illinois.

Light-footed as a deer, scarcely pausing to think, Antywine with inherited instinct turned east toward the river, though it was the direction opposite that in which





ABOVE THE DAM AT NEW SALEM

## Spanish Peggy

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Peggy was carried. A boat could be found at the mill. The river was high and running swiftly. By taking advantage of the unusual current he might reach the bluff road as soon as a horse floundering across the mud of the prairies would be able to reach it. What he would then do afoot he did not attempt to foresee. There was a small settlement at the mouth of Rock Creek called Wolf. Oxen were more plentiful than horses in Wolf, as in New Salem; yet Antywine had one passing flash of determination to go there and demand a horse. But breathless with haste, he plunged through naked woods and down the terraced bank of the Sangamon, sliding on dead leaves in his descent, straight to the mill.

The boat was tied above the dam. He pushed out before he thought of the dam, half covered by swelling water and roaring across the width of the Sangamon. Antywine was never more alive than when his feet were planted in a boat. He came of a line of voyageurs who had threaded Canadian rapids time out of mind. Although his later years had been spent in Belleville, off great stream courses, his inborn dexterity was too much a part of him to be forgotten. There was no time for thought. He swooped down the curve poised in the stern of his boat, laughing aloud at the shock, which nearly swamped him. The boat ran without direction, making for partly submerged trees while he bailed with his hands. Antywine stuck out an oar for rudder, and turned his craft into the racing current. So, baling with one hand and steering with the other, he got under way,

## Spanish Peggy

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and was soon able to sit on the bench, fit the oars into rowlocks, and pull with the racing force which spun him along. Branches and logs menaced his dim course.

The shores were black. Froth spots like white money appeared and disappeared around him with phosphoric swiftness. And underneath rose and fell the bullfrogs' diapason.

Not many miles down was the fork of the Sangamon, where the stream turned toward the Illinois. Beardstown, by prairie and river-bluff route, was nearly forty miles from New Salem. Frost was out of the ground, and a bottomless trail would delay the most hurried rider. The scalloped bank, ascending and descending in serrated cliff and hollow, seeming to swim past Antywine, finally curved away from a wider current; and he made for shore through drift. He drew the boat out, and left it beached above the rising water.

There was no sound abroad in all that void darkness except the Sangamon's low note and the intermittent cry of frogs. He thought of sloughs on the Beardstown road, and of hungry wolves infesting the night. Starlight had become lost in thickening mist, and as Antywine pushed on he felt the sting of rain in his face. He tried to distinguish a track which ought to darken the pallid turf near this place, and set out in the direction of Beardstown.

He heard at his left the suction of horse feet in mud. It came nearer, and he braced himself to spring at the bridle, if he had been so fortunate as thus to intercept

## Spanish Peggy

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Peggy's captor. But two horses, instead of one, plunged up from a slough, and swept past him in a tearing race toward Beardstown.

"Shickshack and Sieur Abe," thought Antywine. He shouted after them, but they did not hear him. There was so little travel at that season he felt sure these riders were in pursuit of Peggy, and comforted, he followed lightly on, keeping to the spongy dead grass by the roadside.

The humid forest stretching from the bank of the Sangamon still darkened his way with skeleton trees. He passed an empty cabin which he had seen once before when hunting deer. The rain now began to pelt.

Though he had lived so long among English-speaking people at Belleville that their language had become in a measure his own, Antywine never found himself able to part with buckskins. The hunting shirt was sometimes exchanged for one of linsey, but buckskin breeches, molding his supple limbs down to his moccasins, he always wore, making them himself, as his father had done before him. Indifferent to weather, he stepped on through darkness and was within hand's reach of an unsteady object before he saw it.

Antywine gave a laughing shout to scare a wolf and followed it by an exclamation. He lifted the toppling figure in his arms and ran back with it to the empty cabin.

Peggy had a blanket around her, but she was wet and cold and seemed partially stunned. The puncheons or

## Spanish Peggy

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split logs which floored the cabin sagged inward as if a sill had rotted at the farther side, and the chimney was a ruin upon its own hearth. Perhaps wolves or wild hogs made this place a lair. Antywine had not his tinder box with him. It was impossible to get a light. The fallen door he dragged aside from its opening and made a seat for Peggy.

"Stay here, sweetheart," spoke Antywine, using an English word which he did not quite understand, but translated in his own mind as "little one."

He made the circuit of the walls, kicking his way in the dark, satisfying himself that no beast housed with them. Then he sat down on the door where he could shelter Peggy from the wind.

"Are you hurt, sweetheart?"

Peggy found her voice with a laugh. "Goody! you've come, Antywine! I was trying to walk without my crutch when you picked me up. I had to hop."

"How you happen where I find you?"

"I don't know. The horse stumbled and fell down, and maybe I was pitched on my head. This blanket was round me so tight that I fought to get my mouth and nose and hands out. It seemed like there were a dozen horses racing, and I thought they would all run over me. But when I got up I was beside the road, and could just hear the mud splashing away off."

"Who is it that steal you?"

"Of course, it must have been that Pedro Lorimer man, though I couldn't see him, and only heard his voice when



## Spanish Peggy

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he spoke to the horse. He threw a blanket over me and made me ride on the horse's neck, and I'm so little and lame I couldn't help myself. Are you cold, Antywine?"

"No," he answered, with a Canadian's indifference. But Peggy gave him a corner of the blanket and bade him draw it around his shoulders, which he did.

The rain beat upon shingles and spouted from the cabin eaves. There was snugness in being housed after so much anxiety and exertion.

"We wait here." The boy laughed quietly to himself. "Shickshack say to Sieur Abe Lincoln, 'Antywine, he is nothing but a squaw.' But I find you, and Shickshack have not."

"Did he call you a squaw?"

"Me, yes; he call me that."

"You are like a woman, Antywine," said Peggy, after considering. "I want you to be like a woman."

"Tonnerre! Why?"

"Because you are like one."

Antywine turned this illogical reason in his mind.

"How can we go home, Antywine?"

"We wait," he replied, "until Shickshack and Sieur Abe come back. They ride the horses you think will run over you, and they not see you in the dark. They chase the man to Beardstown."

"Are you sure?"

"I think so."

Peggy's mind at once turned back to New Salem.

"I wonder what Sally will do when we get home."

## Spanish Peggy

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"It is that woman that make a squaw of me," said Antywine. "Since my father marry her she has been worse than a loup-garou. I not mind the fist or the stick—bah!—but her evil eye, and the beard on her chin—saints! I am crawl all over! It is not healt'y to be scare all the time! I wear a charm against her. When she take Shickshack I think I will go to my father's peop' in Canada. But if I do she will have nobody but you when she is enrage. And see what is done to you when we are but out of the house, sweetheart!"

Peggy busied herself in silence and threw an object from her which bounded among the chimney ruins.

"I am not going to be a peg-leg any more," she announced. "I'll not strap that wooden leg to my knee again."

"But you not able to walk," said Antywine. "I carry you," he added, in afterthought.

"Shickshack will take me on the horse when he comes. It's so ugly. Don't you think a peg-leg is ugly, Antywine?"

"I have not consider," he responded; adding, with French grace, "not anything that belong to you is ugly."

"My mouth," suggested Peggy. "It will not shut."

"It is like the wild plum," said Antywine, "when the white bud is just break through."

Though they had been housemates almost a year, Peggy and Antywine felt that they were just discovering each other. The tall, silent lad had once in a while ven-

## Spanish Peggy

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tured on some kindness to the girl. There was between them the whimsical sympathy of companions in misery.

"And I am so little," continued Peggy, after a silence. "People think I am only ten years old. Ann Rutledge is large and beautiful."

"Mam'selle Ann Rutledge," responded Antywine, "is too large to be carry. You are not too large to be carry."

"But I want to be," insisted Peggy.

"Me, I think you will grow," conceded Antywine, indulgently.

"Do you think I will always be lame?"

"I not know. The doctor in Belleville cannot say."

"The doctor in Belleville put that peg-leg on my knee. Sometimes I think if I try to use my leg, Antywine, it will grow stronger. But I have to hop yet when Sally takes my crutch from me."

"Shickshack think, and me, I think too, she have bring that lameness on you."

"I never contradicted her when she told him it was a fall; but she knows when she struck me and how it hurt. Don't tell him, Antywine. Shickshack is so good."

"She not fool me," said Antywine. "I think now I will give you my charm to keep off evil."

"What is it?"

He took her hand in the darkness and laid a small image on the palm. She knew it was something which their religion taught them to venerate.

"No, Antywine, I will not take it from you."

## Spanish Peggy

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"Keep it," he insisted. "I feel better when I am out hunting if you have that around your neck. She bring evil into the house. She is worse than the Chasse Galerie."

"What is the Chasse Galerie?"

"Have you never hear of the Chasse Galerie that fly across the sky at night?"

"How could I hear about such things in the Sac village or at Belleville?"

Antywine proceeded at once to tell the story of the wild huntsman and his dogs, and their chase above the clouds. This led on to feux follets, or balls of fire, into which bad spirits turned themselves to lure sinners into quagmires. Then loup-garous, or man-wolves, made darkness flame with their eyes, to Peggy's imagination.

"Are your feet or hands cold?" Antywine inquired once in a while. Peggy answered "No," forgetting she had hands and feet, her large, excited gaze fixed on the wonder-world of folk-story. His voice abounded in sympathetic tones. It was full and golden, reaching into distance or sinking to monotones as he half told and half sung his people's legends.

So hour after hour passed; rain continued to pour down the shingles and visit them in gusts of spray through the broken chimney.

It was a delicious experience to remember a lifetime. But as Peggy's responses became few, Antywine stretched out his legs and made a pillow of his lap with a corner

## Spanish Peggy

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of the blanket, to which her drowsy head came readily down. He watched and she slept until darkness faded to the pallor of dawn.

The noise of horses' feet in the heavy road, for which he had waited so long, could at last be heard approaching. He withdrew carefully from the head of the sleeper, and went out to intercept the riders.

They were splashed with mud and jaded, moving side by side, their tired horses snorting flakes of foam. Thus more than once the men of New Salem had come back from chasing horse-thieves, less ready, perhaps, to give the details of the exploit than were Shickshack and his companion. Both drew rein when they saw Antywine, and he told them directly where Peggy was.

Shickshack asked where he found her. He pointed to the road beyond the cabin, and in his brief Canadian-English repeated what had happened.

"Your squaw boy doesn't put up many fizzlegigs and fireworks, but he seems to be worth two men," observed Lincoln.

His lank hair dripped moisture. He was haggard with hard riding.

"You catch the man?" inquired Antywine.

"No," Shickshack answered in disgust.

"You know him?"

"No. Me not care now."

"He winked out," said Lincoln. "We lost him this side of Beardstown. The closest view we had was when we nearly ran him down back here. We intended to

## Spanish Peggy

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raise a party and hunt. I reckon you better bring the little girl now, so we can get home to breakfast."

Shickshack's red face revealed itself through growing daylight polished like copper. He gave a strong grunt of satisfaction when Antywine set Peggy behind him on the horse. The Canadian boy mounted lightly to a seat behind Lincoln, and as they rode toward New Salem a clear whiteness like the promise of fair weather appeared in the east. Water hung beaded on the stems of trees, but a great commotion of robins came out of the woods.

It was the general opinion in the village that Don Pedro Lorimer had "done it." Why he should put himself to the inconvenience of trying to carry off such a poor little thing many declared they could not understand. All day Lincoln was visited at the store by inquiring friends, who sat on counters and salt barrels and interrogated him about his night's ride. He joked, as any man among them would have done, about the hard service taken out of borrowed horses, instead of dwelling on the Indian's affairs and the labors of the night. Lincoln had the strength of three ordinary men.

"I allow," said one of the Carolina settlers, "that it was an ornary trick of one of them Grove boys."

"I guess you are wrong there," put in a Massachusetts man. "The Grove boys know better than to pick the runt out of a litter. If one of them wanted to steal a girl he wouldn't go so nigh the tavern and stop on the outside."

The outrage was resented as a municipal indignity,

## Spanish Peggy

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whoever had attempted it ; but it stirred less resentment than it would have stirred had any other young maid in New Salem been the sufferer. It was talked about a fortnight with zest and much repetition. By the end of a month it was still good material, when women took their knitting and visited one another of afternoons. But by muster day other slow happenings had covered it.

If Sally knew more about it than any one else, she kept the secret. The Sac brave often fixed his eyes on her with speculation in them.

"In my tribe," he said once to Lincoln, "a warrior can take a tent-pole and beat his squaw, or he can give her plenty goods and drive her out of his wigwam. But me marry white woman ; me have to stand her like white man."

He was at first concerned, and questioned Peggy about the loss of her wooden leg.

"I will not wear it," she repeated, stubbornly. "It hurt, and I threw it away."

She hopped about the street on her crutch, which Ann Rutledge had found by the hand-mill the night the alarm was given, her injured leg hanging straight beneath the deerskin garment. Some change in her was noticed, even by her schoolmates.

"Who cut Peggy Shickshack's hair, Viane Rutledge?" inquired Nancy Green, when the girls sat outdoors with their dinner reticules the first warm day. The budding woods were then alive with bees.

"Ann," responded Ann's younger sister, with asperity.

## Spanish Peggy

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"We have her tagging to our house all the time, now. I allow the Indians might as well move in with us."

"Shickshack's wife doesn't visit the neighbors, does she?"

"No. She stays at home and heats water to scald the boys with."

"Peggy looks nicer with her hair cut straight around below her ears and combed smooth. And I am glad she lost her wooden leg when Satan or something tried to carry her off."

"My brother Red," exclaimed Martha Bell Clary, "told me the horse blanket that was throwed over Peggy Shickshack that night smelt of brimstone!"

"Your brother Red," retorted Nancy Green with impatience, "gets threatened with brimstone so much in meeting that he smells it on everything!"

"Well, how do you suppose the boat Antywine La Chance went down the river in, got back to the mill by morning, when he rode home on horseback?"

"Antywine brought it back himself. Part of the way he pulled the boat, and part of the way he rode horseback. You get such stories in the Grove!" said Mahala Cameron.

Martha Bell wagged her head and looked at Peggy, sitting apart, eating corn bread in solitude. She was glad to be Martha Bell Clary instead of Peggy Shickshack. None of the girls meant to be cruel. They wished Peggy well, but made her understand she was not as other daughters of New Salem.



## Spanish Peggy

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"We all thought she was queer before we found out she was a Spaniard," said Martha Bell.

"You'd be queer, too," exclaimed Nancy Green, "if you'd been born a Spaniard and raised among the Sacs, and dressed always like a squaw."

"But I wasn't."

"Peggy can talk the Sac language just like Shickshack," remarked Mahala. "Let's get her do it for us."

"Shickshack won't let her," objected Ann Rutledge's sister. "He wants her to learn English. He says she learned to speak English in a year."

"Humph!" commented another of the group, resentfully; "the master shows partiality to Peggy Shickshack, so he does; but I wouldn't be her, if she is the best reader in school."

This first really warm noon of the budding year, while Peggy's schoolmates were looking at and talking about her, Antywine stood at the open tavern door waiting to speak to Ann Rutledge. Too bashful to knock, he shifted from one moccasin to the other, hoping that some kind saint would send Ann to the door to inquire what he wanted. He had a parcel in his left hand, and sometimes held it before him and sometimes hid it behind his back, keeping his right hand ready to uncap himself if she appeared. There was not anything in the woods or on the prairie which Antywine feared. But Ann Rutledge represented to his mind the power of society; and he was coming to sue that power. She entered, singing, from an inner room, and paused, throwing her long braids

## Spanish Peggy

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behind her back when she saw the Canadian at the door.

He snatched off his cap, standing erect, narrow of hips and shoulders and full in chest, an elegant lightness of make and grace of carriage setting him apart from English-Americans, and fixed his wistful blue eyes upon her.

"Come in, Antywine La Chance."

"No, mam'selle. I will stand here."

"Did you want to see any one?"

"I want to see you."

"Here I am." The girl dimpled at his embarrassment.

"Mam'selle, I have to ask of you a favor. Will you do me the kindness to look at what I bring in my hand?"

FROM the back yard of more than one New Salem home, where soap-making and gardening were going forward, azure smoke rose over pink coals of wood and old vines. The whole world was getting ready to be new. Ann's own winter linsey was laid aside. She wore something which made her look like a blossom to the eyes of the boy.

Antywine gave her the parcel and stood abashed while it was unrolled, revealing yards of dark red and yellow calico, the colors alternating in tiny flecks which globed themselves to pomegranates. Ann had noticed it in the store as a most daring attempt in cotton printing. Some balls of thread fell out and Antywine picked them up.

"It's for Peggy, isn't it?"

"Yes, mam'selle."

"Did you buy it yourself, Antywine?"

"I have some money that I make in Belleville," he apologized. "Shickshack and the woman have not got some tas'e in clothes for young girls. You, mam'selle, have that tas'e."

"If you think I really have, Antywine, you must let me help Peggy make this dress."

"Oh, mam'selle! It is what I would ask, but dare not!"

## Spanish Peggy

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"I would love to do it, and Peggy will be so glad to have a new dress."

Peggy was glad when Ann waylaid her in the evening. Her face quivered and she said, "Goody!" She talked the great event quite out with Antywine, standing beside their cabin, because they seldom spoke to each other in the presence of Shickshack's wife. Then there was the joy of going to the tavern and learning neat stitches while Ann cut and basted and fitted. The slow process of hand sewing went on a part of every day, as the two girls had time, until Peggy, by the accident of Antywine's choice, stood at last unconsciously arrayed in the colors of Spain. The garment was gathered to her slim figure under the bust, whence escaping fullness hung as low as her ankles. This short-waisted look, and the gorgeous setting of colors for her pale olive skin, and her hair cut in the fashion of the Middle Ages, suddenly developed in her a charm. People noticed her, and said that she was not exactly growing pretty, but there was something to her. The confidence of knowing how to do things appeared in her face. For, having begun with the needle, Ann Rutledge went on to knitting and spinning.

Ann had pretty clothes, for her father never rode to Springfield without bringing her a gift, and her mother even indulged her with a cassimere pelisse modeled after one worn by the doctor's wife, who came a bride to New Salem. Viane saw with some resentment her elder sister take things which had usually fallen to her and cut them over for the Indian's adopted daughter. Thus Peggy

## Spanish Peggy

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became transformed in every garment except her moccasins. To these heelless, quill-embroidered shoes she clung with the instinct of a wilderness lover. They were light and soft and small, hampering her no more than her own muscles. Antywine made them for her when he made his own. In return she knitted woolen stockings to keep him and her foster father warm in winter.

When Peggy first learned to knit she pulled the yarn so tight that the stocking leg stood above the needles as stiff as a board triangle and had to be raveled and done over.

"You're not building stake-and-ridered fences for your men folks," laughed Ann.

Shickshack's wife gave Peggy many tasks to do, but in a house where there was no home-making, strewn with the appointments of a dirty camp, the tasks were sordid and often useless. Sally let pots and kettles litter the hearth, and her cob pipe dropped ashes into a dinner hanging on the crane; the joists were grimy, and dust stood thick on the pewter she got with her first husband and was too stingy to use. But her splint-bottomed chairs had to be scoured with soap and sand every week, and she made the lame girl, in deerskin dress, creep inch by inch over the puncheon floor, cleaning it by the same hard process. When the weather was bad Peggy's tasks were doubled, and her struggle with marks of New Salem clay became hopeless.

Shickshack's wife never seemed to look up; plodding along the street, her sullen eyes fixed on the ground, she exchanged no word with a neighbor. Shickshack's dis-

## Spanish Peggy

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gust was extreme with sordid housekeeping he had nowhere encountered in an Indian village.

The changes in Peggy Shickshack were not without influence on her schoolmates, but the Spaniard, with pride of her own, held aloof from them. They swung their feet from tall benches and whispered behind their books while Peggy fiercely studied. When the Testament class stood up she was at the head. Her progress through the simple course was so rapid that Minter Grayham calculated she would know in a year all that he was able to teach her.

Antywine, whose stepmother had never sent him to school, was nineteen years old, and could not read. Peggy began to teach him during the long spring twilights. There was a large stone halfway across the valley, sheltered as the sun slipped north of afternoons, under which Peggy hid her outgrown lesson book for Antywine. Whatever direction his day's hunt led him, he made a detour to arrive at the stone, and if he arrived first, sat down to study. If Peggy, carrying her dinner reticule home from school, reached it first, she waited.

They sat and held the book together. English spelling provoked Canadian exclamations; but he had to spur him not only Peggy, but the powerful example of Sieur Abe Lincoln, studying every spare minute.

Antywine knew where the best swimming places were in the Sangamon. Sometimes he came to his lesson, his blond hair separating into dark clinging tendrils, which, as they dried, became a powder of gold-shot curls around

## Spanish Peggy

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his face and temples. If Peggy could not keep her fingers from touching this fleece, Antywine pretended he did not know it. His hands and shoulders worked as hard as his mind. With shrugs and gesticulating fingers he flung English spelling all around. When he encountered a terrific word he would throw down the book and jump on it. But Antywine's moccasins were light; he did not damage the learning under his feet. His rages were all rages of laughter. Whatever he did so delighted Peggy that she said:

"It makes me almost laugh out in school to think how you dance on your speller!"

As month followed month and Pedro Lorimer neither showed himself again in New Salem nor made any other attempt to kidnap the Indian's adopted daughter, her guardian's anxiety relaxed to ease. He thought: "These white men in this village are my friends; they will take my part. The young chief Abe is as strong as three Pedro Lorimers, and his hand is with me."

Every Sunday Mahala Cameron's father preached in the schoolhouse, and nearly all the people, whether they accepted the Cumberland Presbyterian creed or not, went to the service. Wild-plum groves made bouquets of snow on the prairies. The woods were full of flowers, having such fragrance as breaks only from old loam. All the trees, from the rich green of the pecan to the delicate and slowly deepening maple gave out their foliage to the sun. The Judas tree burst out like flame in the forest.

Happy boys were seen coming home from the river

## Spanish Peggy

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of evenings with strings of croppies, bass, and pike. Half-yearly muster day came, when the local militia stepped out in awkward squads and practiced such military tactics as the leader knew to the squeak of a fife and the thump of a drum. Antywine put himself among the boys. He liked life and movement. But Shickshack stood and looked gloomily on. He knew that his own people, the Sacs, were being crowded in their reservation, and this play of war might sometime become reality. Whisky was plentiful on muster days. Antywine noticed that Lincoln did not touch it. Having considered the height and strength of Sieur Abe, he also spat out of his mouth a taste of fiery stuff pushed between his lips by a Grove boy, and decided that he would fight rather than be forced to drink.

Slicky Green and Ann Rutledge's brother were home, working in their fathers' fields. Young Yates was seen at intervals during the summer. The boys and girls of New Salem found a world of material for their own happiness. There were quiltings, where the older women labored in the afternoon and young men and women came to evening games.

Peggy Shickshack stood outside of such festivities, and so did Antywine, because the singular mother of their household had no fellowship with the mother of any other household. For all the villagers began to look kindly at the unfolding womanliness of the lame Spaniard, the blond head of Antywine, and the good old Indian who loved white men.



## Spanish Peggy

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But the festival that Peggy liked best and was not left out of, was blackberrying. The girls rose at dawn and put on their worst clothes, meeting by appointment at the tavern with baskets on their arms. They did not speak loud. The dust in the road took the prints of their feet like ashes. The whole sweet-smelling world was drenched in dew, and as they brushed down the ravine and across to the woods beyond, they were baptized by every bush. Then their tongues were loosened, and they sang and told stories. Sometimes they pretended to see wolves sneaking to cover, but this was merely for the pleasure of frightening themselves. It was the loveliest pilgrimage ever invented. There was peril in it, too, for in the wooded field of wild brambles the thick-mottled rattlesnake, or objects resembling him, caused many a start and shriek.

Once little Jane Rutledge got a fat grasshopper down her back, and yelled for deliverance from—"a snake! a snake!"

"Oh, run home, Jane! Run home, quick!" cried Mahala Cameron.

But Ann tore the child's clothing open and freed the grasshopper, clinging with all his feet to the tender white back; and they all laughed at Mahala, who would have sent her three miles for help.

Sometimes the girls swam grass to their waists, as in a sea of dew, Peggy dividing her way with her crutch. The rising sun showed glittering in the brambles, blackberries and luscious dewberries half as long as one's

## Spanish Peggy

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thumb, melting ripe to keep that very morning's appointment. To go blackberrying late in the day was not to go blackberrying at all, but to a hot and weary search of rifled fields.

When the party trailed homeward with heaped baskets they could see along the ridge of the Sangamon tents and camps of farmers who had come long distances to mill. Each man was obliged to wait his turn to have his grain ground. It was like a fair. Quoit pitching, wrestling matches, races, and trading filled up the idle time.

Insensibly the season changed. Sumac leaves began to burn around scarlet fruit veiled in white, the oaks were faintly tinted, and the first September days had come.

Antywine's reading lessons at the stone ended, for Lincoln was taking up surveying and going out to distant parts of the county, and Antywine was to go with him as his chain-bearer.

"I put the book in my bundle," said the Canadian while he and Peggy were bidding each other farewell at the stone. "Sieur Abe will help me."

Peggy's hands and feet became cold. She felt as if autumn were driving the blood back upon her heart.

"Viane Rutledge told at school the other day that you are the best-looking young man in New Salem."

Antywine expanded with satisfaction. He always carried his chin up, so that people called him high-headed.

## Spanish Peggy

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"I am tall."

"Don't you think Viane Rutledge is a pretty girl, Antywine?"

"Yes."

"She's the prettiest girl that goes to school, isn't she?"

"Yes."

Tears sprang into Peggy's eyes; she winked them back, ashamed of being grieved.

"But Viane Rutledge is not a good reader," she honestly declared.

"Me, I am not a good reader, either," observed Antywine.

"You don't want to put yourself alongside of Viane Rutledge as a poor reader," spoke Peggy, sharply—"do you?"

"I don't know," returned Antywine, with a teasing winsomeness specially his own. He smiled on the landscape and lifted his chin higher, a look of concern replacing the smile.

"Why you cry, sweetheart?"

"My foot's tired," said Peggy, drying her tears.

"You been trying to walk without the crutch?"

"A little."

"Then I carry you up to the house."

"I don't want you to. If Mahala Cameron's brother was here he could help you make a saddle and carry me. He takes hold of hands with one of the Clary boys, and they lift me up on the saddle and run with me when we play Indian."

## Spanish Peggy

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"He have no business!" exclaimed Antywine, full of indignation. "They will fall and hurt you!"

"O, no, they won't. He is a nice boy, and has such red cheeks."

"Me, if I have those red cheeks I strip the skin off my face!" said Antywine, disgusted. "You like those red cheeks, eh?"

"Well, I think they are about as pretty as Viane Rutledge."

"Viane Rutledge," spoke Antywine, sincerely, "she not have that charm like you, and those manners."

"Do you think I am learning manners?"

"You have improve every day."

"Antywine, I've got the best apple in my pocket! Don't you want a bite of it?"

"Did those Cameron boy give you that apple?"

"No."

"You have it, then, from that Grove feller, who is behave so bad the master whip him?"

"No. Mahala gave it to me."

"Then I will take some bite."

Peggy drew forth the apple and they ate it together, feeling that their differences were reconciled. It was their parting meal, for food eaten at Sally's board had no such taste as this.

Shickshack said nothing about Antywine's first serious undertaking of civilized work. The boy until that time had been nothing but a hunter. Perhaps the Indian pondered on the white man's influence. He set himself

## Spanish Peggy

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to bring in plenty of venison to dry for winter, and an abundance of buckskin to tan. His cabin was as good as any in New Salem.

Shickshack held land in his reservation, as all his tribe held it, without cultivating or improving an acre except patches of maize and pumpkins. He could not understand the white man's greed of real estate when the prairies were so free to all. The product of his labor consisted of peltries. These he exchanged for the necessities of simple living.

Shickshack was not unmindful of the change in his adopted child. He used to watch her silently. When she brought him the first pair of stockings made by her hand he sat and smoothed them across his buckskin knee. They were useless to him as a covering, for he could not enjoy the freedom of his ankles in anything but hunter's neips.

Before the weather grew cold he gave Peggy a roll of heavy dark red linsey cloth instead of the usual tanned deerskins. Ann Rutledge helped her cut and make the dress. He had the satisfaction of seeing her warmly clad, in short-waisted gown with bag sleeves and a thick cape and hood lined with dull yellow flannel which Ann had saved among her stores.

As autumn days drew close to the margin of winter, the big boys, relieved of labor that they owed to their parents every working season until they were twenty-one years old, came to Minter Grayham's school. Though willing to make themselves useful carrying in logs for the

## Spanish Peggy

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fireplace, they were full of frolic as colts. They stirred up the school until Minter Grayham in despair made a new law and announced that he would listen to no more complaints of wad-throwing, fisticuffing, and fighting, unless the complainant could show that blood had been drawn. Then the boys were gloriously happy. The sallow young schoolmaster, writing copies at his high desk, would suddenly hear through the drone of study:

“Master, Viane Rutledge looked at me and drew blood!”

“Master, Nancy Green’s eyes are drawing blood on me this minute!”

In November there was a haze over the landscape like bloom on grapes. Indian summer lingered. Settlers had not then learned the Mississippi Valley’s sudden and bitter changes of climate.

Lincoln and Antywine were still absent early in December, when Shickshack waited one evening behind Minter Grayham’s schoolhouse for Peggy to come out. A jet of boys and girls seemed to spout forth, racing down to Rock Creek. They could almost smell their supper johnnycakes across the ravine. Peggy was hopping briskly in the joyful midst of her schoolmates, when she saw her foster father beckoning her at the foot of the bluff. She followed him.

Shickshack led her where there was no path through ascending woods, parting naked bushes for her, and helping her over fallen logs which had become almost a powder of flakes covered with moss.

## Spanish Peggy

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“Where are we going?” she inquired more than once.

But Shickshack made no reply until he had put a loop of deerskin around him over his blanket, and lifted Peggy on his back in this portable hammock. She was learning to use her lame leg with a stoical determination which the New Salem doctor encouraged. Though never without her crutch, she oftener carried than leaned on it. Shickshack was evidently undertaking a journey, and she looked anxiously through the woods as some flakes of snow melted on her face, and up at the void peopled as by winged white insects.

“Father,” said Peggy in the Sac language, “where are you taking me?”

“To the young chief Yates,” he answered in English, trudging across the ridge, sure-footed and muscular.

“But he lives far away, and I won’t go! What will Antywine and Mr. Lincoln say when they come home?”

“Antywine and the chief Abe on the survey trail. They not here to stop Pedro Lorimer. He get you this time.”

“Has he come back again?”

Shickshack grunted. “At the Grove—two, four days. He tell the young braves Black Hawk is on the war path. Drive out old Indian! Burn his wigwam! Old Indian help Black Hawk. Me not need totem signs to find out what he want. He say old Indian have no business to keep white girl.”

“But, father, you cannot carry me so far!” Peggy strongly revolted. She wept, shivering against his back.

## Spanish Peggy

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He descended toward a darkened plain without heeding her arguments against his course, except to assure her he intended to hire a horse at the first cabin.

The sloughs were frozen, and frost-blackened grass crisped under his feet. Nowhere could any farmhouse light be seen, and the gentle flicker-like insect wings had become a driving storm of snow. Shickshack found the road stretching southwest toward Jacksonville, and plodded steadily along. Jogging through an immensity of night and cold and drifting whiteness, Peggy ceased to beg that he would let her walk, and lapsed into such drowsiness that he was obliged to shake her when he set her down. By that time the chill windrows were nearly to his knees. Unsheltered by his body, she felt the dry spume spinning in her face.

"Me have to put you in the log to-night," said Shickshack. "Snow too bad to go farther."

Every New Salemite had heard of or seen the huge hollow log strangely left upon the prairie beside that road. Once Slicky Green and another boy, belated on a bitter night while searching for lost cattle, had driven wild hogs out of it, and saved their own lives in its roomy hollow. It loomed a white ridge, higher than Peggy's head, its black opening already banked with drift. Shickshack crawled in with his knife unsheathed. A yelping, snarling struggle was muffled by the log, until something dark leaped past Peggy, and ran across the snow.

"Wolf," observed the Sac. "Him not like to leave him good bed."





“SHICHSHACK CRAWLED IN WITH HIS KNIFE UNSHEATHED”



## Spanish Peggy

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Reluctantly, in spite of the cold, Peggy crawled past him into the deep shelter, dragging her crutch. Her hand touched something furry, and green eyes shot flame at her. Shickshack haled a cub from its cushion of rotten wood and threw it out after its mother.

Peggy was so drowsy that she remembered nothing further of the night, except some noises at the open end of the log.

When she awoke it was light enough to see overhead the ridged vault of her wooden cavern. The snow cast in a pallid illumination. She sat up and called Shickshack. He remained in a rigid attitude, with his back to her, and his legs extending out under a white lapful. His arm was hard as marble in her hand when she touched him, and he did not turn his head.

“Father!” she screamed. “Father!”

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THE old Sac, who had guarded her roof-tree, whether cabin or wigwam, every night of her remembrance, sat upright, holding his knife, on which frozen blood was crystallized. Two or three dead wolves lay outside the log on the snow. But not one of them was frozen stiffer than the Indian, who, after his own fashion, had given life itself for the safety of his adopted child.

Peggy would not believe he was dead. She clung to his solid shoulders, and screamed to rouse him. The Sac, who loved white men, and had never failed to answer the appeal of his white child, silently blocked the entrance of the log. His eyebrows were hoar frost, and the dark ruddiness of his face and neck seemed crusted with rough silver.

Peggy's wild crying might have resounded long in the hollow log, and brought no person to help her. For all around was the vast prairie stretching from horizon to horizon, a glare of whiteness unpierced by the smoke of a single fire. But two figures toiled toward New Salem through the early cold, wading with effort, and finally making for the hummock in which they recognized the submerged log. Lincoln and his chain-bearer encountered

## Spanish Peggy

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the frozen Indian and the crying girl as they stooped to enter and warm themselves.

High as drifts were piled in New Salem streets, for this was the winter known long afterward as "the winter of the deep snow," people gathered hastily through the unabated storm when word went around that Shickshack had been brought in frozen to death. Lincoln and Antywine, in silent agreement, stopped the ox sled they had borrowed, at the door of Rutledge's tavern. Neither said, "Let us take him to his own cabin." In death, at least, he should escape from the environment which Sally made, and be publicly honored.

Antywine went directly to carry the news to the widow, and Sally heard it, making a clicking sound of disapproval with her tongue.

She knocked the ashes out of her cob pipe, partly on the hearth and partly in the dinner pot, which hung from the crane.

"Now don't that beat ye! Gone and froze hisself to death the first big snow, and New Salem seven miles from a buryin' ground! He always was the most ill-convenient old In'jan! Took him to the tavern, did ye?"

"Yes," replied Antywine, without apology.

"Well, keep him there. I'll come to the funeral. Funerals is no novelty to me, buryin' men as often as I have."

Neighbors talked in whispers around the dignified figure stretched on a white-covered board under an oblong canopy of sheets. But Antywine and Lincoln had them-

## Spanish Peggy

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selves washed it, and dressed it in the Sac's best buckskins. They found girded around the waist a heavy belt of rattlesnake skin.

"This is the snakeskin of money belonging to Peggy that he told me about," Lincoln said to Antywine. "He must have taken it out of its hiding-place before he started to find Dick Yates. What shall we do with it?"

"Put it on, Sieur Abe, to wear for her, as Shickshack did."

"They say snakeskin in the hat is good for the headache; but I don't think I could bear it rubbing against my naked hide. This belt is nearer your size, Antywine."

"Me, I am a boy, Sieur Abe. Shickshack put his trust in you. He tell you I am a squaw!"

"I reckon he changed his opinion. He only struck out to find Dick because we were away. But you're a little nearer than nearest of kin to Peggy, so if you say I'm to undertake the thing, I'll try it. And if Mother Eve is too strong in me to stand the snake next to me I'll manage it some other way."

Lincoln and Antywine also helped the cooper make Shickshack's coffin, for neighbor was then obliged to depend upon neighbor for such a service. No fee was ever charged, though if one was offered it had to be accepted.

Religion did little to soften the grimness of death in those early days. The unpainted coffin stood on two chairs in the largest room of the tavern, and Mahala Cameron's father, hymn book in hand, placed himself

## Spanish Peggy

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behind it as behind an intrenchment, whence he could launch warnings on the uncertainty of life. His father, called old Daddy Cameron, a tremulous and toothless creature, who encountered age as a disease rather than a transition, sat by, sighing, as if to illustrate the unpleasantness of life's certainty.

Such funeral rites as New Salem afforded were held in the early forenoon, because snow continued to fall, and seven miles of drift had to be cut through to Concord burying ground. The entire population, as well as men from Clary's Grove, crowded the tavern. People stared when Don Pedro Lorimer came in with Redmond Clary, richly and warmly dressed, as if he had not found it unprofitable to plead the annexation of Cuba. His shining black hair and olive face had a placid, worldly look. One hard-working woman whispered to another that you would not think butter could melt in his mouth, and he appeared the last man to rob an orphan or to run her off with him against her will.

Peggy saw him through her tears with indignation. She sat beside Antywine on one of three chairs which Ann Rutledge placed at the head of the coffin for Shickshack's family. But the third chair remained vacant until the preacher stood in embarrassment, undecided whether or not to raise a hymn while all the mourners gathered.

Shickshack's widow finally entered the tavern muffled from the snow in a blanket, carrying a basket on her arm. The crowded assembly opened to let her pass. She set her

## Spanish Peggy

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basket down, and with a vicious pounce took Antywine and Peggy both by the ear. Antywine visibly restrained himself and walked unresisting with Peggy to the foot of the coffin. Sally shoved their chairs after them, and returned to her own place as chief mourner.

"This isn't your funeral!" the bereaved woman explained sourly to them. "He wasn't no kin to either of ye!"

Solemn-featured neighbors relaxed in countenance and looked sidelong at one another. They watched Sally lay off the blanket and take from her basket a rusty mourning shawl, a black bonnet, and crape veil. In this regalia, kept for her husbands' funerals, she dressed herself publicly, and, having completed her preparations, sat down, heaving a deep sigh. The sight of her beard under widow's weeds so affected one of the Grove boys that he disgraced himself by an audible snort. He did not mind disturbing meeting, but a funeral was different; and he whispered apologetically to the man beside him: "I bet God laughed when He made that woman!"

Candles were lighted in the tavern before the masculine population of New Salem—for only those went who could shovel snow and help dig a grave—returned from burying Shickshack. A river of icy air flowing out of the northwest had by that time cleared the storm away. Peggy and Antywine were to spend the second night of their peculiar orphanage at the Rutledges', in order to settle the business of Peggy's own inheritance, which Shickshack had silently passed on to his successors.



## Spanish Peggy

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They sat down with Lincoln and Ann Rutledge in the best room, and he put the rattlesnake skin before them on a table. Peggy looked at it curiously, having never before seen her fortune, or the case which held it. The spots described by scales made her shudder. Ann also saw it with aversion, and wondered why Shickshack preferred that to a strong piece of buckskin.

"A rattlesnake," said Lincoln, "when you get over the first shock of introduction to him, is a mighty pretty fellow. See his combine of colors! He has lost his first freshness and his rattles, trying to bruise the tough hide of mankind. But I doubt if he ever stung anybody; he wouldn't unless he was crowded."

Through an open door the tavern kitchen displayed a roaring hearth, where the Dutch oven, with coals on its head and beneath its feet, held a joint of venison. A coffee pot, standing on a trivet over embers, sent perfume abroad. Johnnycakes of parched corn ground in the hand-mill were browning on boards slanted toward the fire—"the best bread that ever was e't!" testifies a surviving New Salemite. Hominy hissing in pork fat sent its song through the room, while the younger Rutledge girls helped their mother bring to the table cold turkey, cream and butter, fruits preserved in maple syrup, and honey found in the wild-bee tree.

Plenty of food, an abundance of candle-light, and the heartening warmth of the Franklin stove near her, may have suggested visions to Peggy as she inquired of her friends, "What must I do with this money?"

## Spanish Peggy

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"Sieur Abe has kept it safe," suggested Antywine.

"There is no one trustier!" spoke Ann.

"Will you keep it for me, Mr. Lincoln?"

"I am not a good money-getter," he laughed, "and I doubt if I am a good money-keeper. The only thing I could do would be to carry it around for you and guarantee it shouldn't fall into worse hands."

"The sweetheart knows you are the strongest man in New Salem," said Antywine, resting his cheek upon his hand and lifting eyes of confidence to his elder.

"But I haven't measured with Clary's Grove yet."

"Antywine and I both know," said Peggy, "how everybody looks up to you. We could not keep it ourselves as well as you could do it for us, Mr. Lincoln."

Ann stretched out one slim, long-fingered hand to caress Peggy's cheek.

"Well, children, I'm of age, and Ann is eighteen. I reckon we'll have to father and mother you. Do you know how much money you have in this bank of Shickshack's, Peggy?"

"I don't."

"Do you know, Antywine?"

"Me? No. I have never inquire', and Shickshack have not sho' me."

"If the trust is to be put into my hands I must know the amount."

Lincoln untied the leather cord which bound the snake's neck, and shook it by the tail. Out gushed all the yellow pieces with the ring of gold upon the table;

## Spanish Peggy

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Spanish doubloons and French louis, which cost him some trouble to calculate. He set them in cylindrical piles, row after row. Wood snapped in the open Franklin stove, and no other sound could be heard in the room but the liquid clink of gold. Ann and Peggy and Antywine watched the counting.

Viane Rutledge, looking through the door at the silent company, beckoned little Jane to stare at such amazing wealth.

"Whose is it?" whispered Jane.

"Peggy Shickshack's, of course. Where would Antywine La Chance, or Mr. Abe Lincoln, or Ann get it? The old Indian must have been a miser. But I wouldn't be her—and a Spaniard—for all her money."

"Two thousand and fifty dollars," announced Lincoln. He began to return the gold to its pouch.

"Two thousand dollars is a large amount," said Ann.

"Am I very rich?" inquired Peggy.

"Well, one hundred dollars will buy eighty acres of land, or two horses. You are therefore worth sixteen hundred acres of land, and something over for calico and linsey; and, considering the times and the country, may call yourself fairly well off."

"Must I buy sixteen hundred acres of land?"

Lincoln's eyes twinkled, losing for a moment their usual expression of dark blue wistfulness. He was not much older than the Canadian boy who venerated him as an oracle, but he had already begun to guide the destinies of others.

## Spanish Peggy

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"You'd better let your husband decide that matter when you are older," he answered, and while the words were being spoken, Pedro Lorimer entered the tavern in a whirl of winter air. He closed the outer door, made his salutations with grace, and approached the table where the money counters sat. Lincoln deliberately filled the snake skin, tied its neck shut, and sat with it in his large hands, pleasantly returning the visitor's greeting. The tavern was free to all comers. Yet Antywine at once stood up in front of Peggy, his blond head towering above the swart arrival.

"What you do here, eh? You drive Shickshack around, so he die in the drift! When I see you to-day I think I will throw you in the street! Go off—get some states hannex' to Cuba!"

"My pretty fellow," returned Pedro Lorimer, "I rode here through very biting cold to see my young cousin. I shall now take charge of her."

"Tell him I won't go with him, Antywine," said Peggy.

"The gentleman must understand," spoke Lincoln, "that he cannot force his guardianship on a girl of Peggy's age—except by kidnaping. We folks in New Salem have not measured ourselves with the great people in the world, but we rather reckon that a New Orleans gambler would make a mighty poor guardian."

The foreigner's olive skin, chilled by the cold from which he had just entered, took a swift greenish pallor. He stepped forward hissing, and snapped his fingers in Lincoln's face. Antywine was upon him like a tiger,

## Spanish Peggy

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dragging him to the door, throwing him out into the snow, and shooting the bolt behind him.

"Goody!" Peggy exclaimed with passionate approval.

Ann put her hands to her eyes and Lincoln laughed.

"Take care, Antywine."

The oiled paper of the window through which Peggy had watched Ann Rutledge from the hand-mill, was slashed by a knife. Antywine flattened himself against the door. The knife shot past his head and stuck quivering in the opposite wall.

If New Salem folks had distrusted this erratic and intermittent visitor from the first, they quite made up their minds about him when he disappeared once more after Shickshack's funeral. It became generally known how he had followed that poor Indian to rob a girl. The winter of the deep snow gave shut-in householders plenty of time to talk. The fact that Pedro Lorimer had been harbored at Clary's Grove added no sweetness to his reputation. Some were afraid he would come back and organize the wild spirits there for any kind of local annexation which might strike his fancy. But the northern winter, from which a tropical nature shrank, went by without disturbance. If Black Hawk had stirred in the Northwest, he settled down to wait a better season. People no longer rode in sleds over buried stake-and-ridered fences. Vast white frosted loaves of prairies, and forests standing knee-deep in snow, returned to their natural aspect. Streams ran brimful, and Rock Creek covered half the valley during the spring thaw.

## Spanish Peggy

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Peggy had plenty of chances to loan her money at a high rate of interest to impecunious people, with little prospect of getting it back. Lincoln said he was not a good adviser, for he had failed at storekeeping, and made debts which must cost him years of hard work. But it appeared to him that her gold was safer in the snakeskin coiled around his waist than it would be turned into anything else, until she could buy and hold land.

Antywine and Peggy had gone back to Sally's cabin. But as the season advanced and it was time to take up the work of surveying again, Antywine consulted Lincoln.

"I have make up my mind," he declared, "not to live with that woman some more at all. She have my father's goods, and her first man's goods, and Shickshack's cabin. She is well off. There is that Onslow house at the west end of the road. I can buy it myself for some trade. We will keep house."

"Peggy and you?"

"Yes," replied Antywine, with innocent enthusiasm. "I will take care of her. Me, I can make moccasins; I can kill plenty deer and cure venison. When I am away with you to carry the chain, she can bar the door and keep Sally out, and I sleep easy. I not sleep easy, Sieur Abe, to go away and leave her alone with that Sally, who may cast an evil eye or a stick of wood at her the minute my back is turn'!"

"You better put off the housekeeping until we come home," suggested Lincoln, smiling, "and let Peggy

## Spanish Peggy

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board at the tavern while we are away. She has plenty of money."

Antywine's blue eyes flashed joy at the unfolding of this brilliant plan. He had never thought of Peggy's money as currency which might be put to use. It was simply a valuable possession, hoarded for her.

Peggy was directly received into the Rutledge family, where she had an abundance of good food and Ann's teaching and companionship for a stipulated sum in shillings and pips amounting to less than two dollars a week. To her it was a season of joy and rapid development. Viane Rutledge, herself budding into girlhood, watched the Spaniard with surprise and reluctant approval. Peggy's angles disappeared. She shot up taller. Her lissome limbs were round, and her halting step without a crutch had an appealing charm. Her little face gathered a sweetness which provoked kisses; it had the clean polish of a flower petal. She was so good and so happy, so busy learning how to manage the affairs of daily living, and so glad to draw her breath, that everybody said, "She is growing pretty! Whoever imagined that little weazened Spaniard would turn out like this?"

Antywine and Lincoln were away until early June. They came driving an ox-wagon from the west into New Salem one evening at sunset, and drew up at the vacant cabin which Antywine intended to make his own. It stood waiting for him in primitive security. The ox-wagon carried a squat, low chest of drawers, evidently bought at second-hand, but bright and rosy through its

## Spanish Peggy

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old mahogany surface, and Antywine's first housekeeping investment. Lincoln helped him unload it, and they set it on the sward before the cabin door.

"I lift him into the house myself," said Antywine. So Lincoln drove the borrowed cattle on, knowing he was welcome to put them into anybody's pasture until he and his chain bearer returned them.

Antywine opened the door of the playhouse he was intending to make for Peggy. Though the sensitive part of him, which Peggy said was like a woman, quivered with delight, he had a free, bold spirit, ready to dare anything. On long tramps and rides and through days of mechanical labor with a master mind he had been coming to his own as a man.

"There's a mighty difference," Lincoln once said to him, "between studying with the outside of your eyeballs and studying with your eyes open clear to the bottom of your brain."

Antywine saw that new oiled paper would have to be put into the weather-beaten windows, over which Peggy would hang short white curtains, perhaps, like those that could be shoved apart on strings at the tavern. He selected the corner for his chest of drawers, and was silently calculating how long it would take to turn out chairs and tables at the cooper's shop, when the smell of a cob pipe made him shut the door to keep Sally from looking into his house. Sally had come up behind him and was examining the chest of drawers. In earlier days, before beard grew upon her face, or avarice and vindic-





“SALLY WAS EXAMINING THE CHEST OF DRAWERS”



## Spanish Peggy

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tiveness hewed it, her piercing black eyes may have been admired. She fixed them on Antywine.

He touched his cap with the courtesy his father had taught him to show all women, and said, "Good day, Sally." He heard Lincoln's gee-hawing to the oxen turn to "W'oa, Buck!" and saw that Slicky Green and young Yates had come down the road to meet the surveyor.

"Have you heard about Peggy's death?" inquired Sally.

"Her death?" Antywine repeated.

"Yes. She was buried a week ago."

“I NOT believe you!” said Antywine.

“You can ask them Rutledges, then, that was hired to take such fine care of her! Why don’t you go and ask them?”

“I not believe you!” trembled Antywine. He sat down on the doorstep holding his blinded head between his hands.

“You and Peggy thought you would go to yourselves, didn’t you? But she lays in Concord buryin’-ground now, right alongside of Shickshack; and you know where he lays. The new grave’s there.”

“I not believe you! I not believe you! I not believe you!”

Antywine leaped from the doorsill and ran like a deer to the tavern, passing the young men and the oxen without noticing or hearing them. Ann Rutledge was sewing by an open window with her back toward him. The two younger girls were in the garden with their mother. He did not see Peggy anywhere. A hush was upon the house, and as Ann turned and saw him with a frightened look on her face, he could not ask any question, but took the path down to Rock Creek, and ran to the stone where Peggy used to hide her book for him. The sun





“RAIN BEAT UPON ANTYWINE THROUGH SAPLING BOUGHS”

## Spanish Peggy

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was down and a ribbon of mist wavered in front of the closed schoolhouse.

Nobody would ever wait for him at that rock again. He ran along the ravine below the gardens and returned to his house, barring the door and drawing the latch-string in. Lying on the floor in the darkest corner, he hid his weeping, and made no answer to the young men, who called his name through the window.

Sally was asleep in her own cabin long before Antywine crept out of his and took the road to Concord burying-ground. It was a long walk under blurred stars, for the wind changed after midnight, belying the promise of a fair sunset.

Antywine tried to bring Peggy's face before him, with its many flitting expressions. Her eyes were hazel, or black, or gray, by changeable turns, swarming with points of light. He remembered drinking from the gourd after her, on the very side where she had drank, and the pleased trembling of her lips when she noticed it. All the ways and traits which went to the making of the companion he called sweetheart were present to his mind, when groping among saplings in the thinly peopled burying-ground he came to Shickshack's sunken grave which he had himself helped to make, and found a fresh clay hillock beside it.

The latter part of the night rain poured upon the chest of drawers which Antywine had left standing in front of the cabin and streamed down its polished sides. Rain beat upon Antywine through sapling boughs, satu-

## Spanish Peggy

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rating his linsey hunting-shirt and darkening his worn buckskins.

Drenched grass and a tangle of little trees he scarcely felt or saw when sodden and miserable daylight came. By the end of the afternoon some light crept out from sunset, and there was a clearing up in the west. Lincoln climbed the burying-ground fence, and found Antywine lying asleep across the new-made grave. He was so ghastly that Lincoln at once shook him, feeling relieved when he opened his eyes.

The boy looked up at the mole like a warm pulsing heart on his friend's cheek. But his friend's eyes twinkled.

"What are you doing here on old Daddy Cameron's grave, Antywine?"

Antywine sprang as from a rattlesnake. He was exhausted, so that Lincoln gave him both hands to help him rise.

"Daddy Cameron died last week and they buried him in the same row with Shickshack. He was a fine old man, but if I were you I wouldn't lie out all night and all day on his grave!"

"Sally have tell me this is where she is bury'!"

"Who? Peggy?"

"Yes, Sieur Abe. Where is she?"

"At the tavern."

"She is not dead?"

"Not a bit!"

"But Sally have tell me—"



## Spanish Peggy

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"Haven't you summered and wintered Sally long enough to know when she is paying you a grudge?"

"But I run to the tavern myself—"

"And scare Ann, and run away again without asking any questions. I've had a long jaunt through the mud and searched the better part of a day for you."

Antywine threw his arms around Lincoln and sobbed and laughed like a woman. He swayed, and could scarcely stand.

"You've made yourself sick being so downhearted, when you ought to have kept your wits. That Lorimer fellow is back at the Grove again, and he's making a bold stand now. If he had known I carry the snakeskin I reckon he would have followed our chain. But Dick Yates is here. We tried to find you last night, and couldn't."

"I tell Sally I not believe her!" shivered Antywine.

"And then you leg it out here and pass a sentimental night and watery day on Daddy Cameron's grave! I'm surprised at you!"

The American way of joking over what had been tragedy seemed delicious to the Canadian boy as he tramped back the long seven miles. When he reached his house at the end of the village Lincoln did not think it advisable to take him any farther. Antywine was so ill that he lay down upon the floor, resisting any suggestion of food.

Through delirious eyes he saw the blaze, which Lincoln contrived to start in the chimney, interlace sticks

## Spanish Peggy

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piled there months before in readiness for a first housewarming.

Lincoln was on his knees blowing it when he heard Slicky Green pant through the door:

"Are you here, Abe? You're wanted at the tavern."

"What's the matter at the tavern?"

"The Grove boys are coming to throw everything out of doors if you don't give that Lorimer man the Spaniard and her money."

"How do you know?"

"Martha Bell Clary slipped off on her father's horse and brought word."

"Where's Dick?"

"He's looking somewhere else for you."

Lincoln stood up and glanced at Antywine, who had suffered, but was unable to fight, resting like a log at the hearth corner.

"Poor Antywine!" he whispered, and carefully shut the door as he went out to settle the unconscious boy's fate.

The self-appointed censors of the Grove had once wrecked a store in New Salem, and kicked the merchandise about the street. The population of the village was about one hundred souls, few of whom could be mustered as fighting men; while the Grove males were all fighting men.

The night was starlit and cloudless, but there was no moon. Dull panes of oiled paper revealed candles in

## Spanish Peggy

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some houses, but a hush like expectation seemed to stretch along the unseen windings of the street. When the Grove boys mounted for a raid of any sort they usually rode at full gallop, yelling like Indians. Lincoln was ahead of Slicky Green in the race to the tavern, when both stopped, halted by a procession with lanterns. There had been no noise of shouting and no crash of destruction. The quiet approach of the company seemed worse than its ordinary rioting.

"They didn't stop at the tavern!" whispered Slicky Green.

They had been to the tavern, for Dick Yates, bare-headed, was leading them peaceably away from it, walking in front of the cavalcade; and a girl's figure could be discerned sitting upon a led horse. The velvet dust of a village road muffled the tread of hoofs. But along house fronts on each side, where footpaths were marked by daily use, sounded the uneven patter of many feet. Men, women, and children of New Salem, suffered to witness what they could not prevent, were hovering around Lincoln and the little Spaniard. He thought he saw Ann Rutledge, in her short-sleeved house dress, her face showing white and anxious through the dark; and Minter Grayham, whose haggardness and puny strength the Grove boys would have laughed at if opposed to them.

"Here is Abe Lincoln," announced Yates; and as if he had given a command to halt, the company halted.

"Here I am," said Lincoln. "Do you want me?"

## Spanish Peggy

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Dick and Slicky stood beside him in the middle of the road.

"My friends and I," spoke a voice with a foreign accent, "have an affair of two minutes with you. You have somewhere a snakeskin purse belonging to my cousin, Consuelo Lorimer. Bring it, and you shall not be injured."

"But if I did she'd be injured!"

"Don't let him take me, Mr. Lincoln!" besought Peggy from the midst of the riders. "I will not go! Where's Antywine?"

"Boys, you ought to be ashamed of yourselves!"

"We didn't come out for a speech, Abe," mocked Redmond Clary.

"And I'm not practicing polemics."

"You get the girl's money and hand it over."

"You let her out of that gang."

The gang growled.

"We have a crowd and you have just two backers. New Salem people can't do anything. We don't want to hurt you, Abe, unless we have to."

"String him up like a horsethief!" cried a man at the rear.

"Are you going to hand over the Spaniard's money?"

"No, I'm not," replied Lincoln.

"Ride him down!" cried another, and the horses were spurred forward. Some women and children shrieked in fright as the three young fellows were driven in retreat to Antywine's cabin and sprang upon the chest

## Spanish Peggy

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of drawers. Standing close together with that short rostrum under their feet, they faced about the ring of horsemen who drew up around them. The perforated tin lanterns showered drops of yellow light on trampled grass. Behind the men's heads and shoulders were a void of trees and the starlit sky, and the excited murmur of New Salem. Lincoln towered in the midst of the circle.

He could dimly see the Spanish girl, and he remembered for one instant how Antywine lay exhausted within the cabin. She was looking for the last time at what was to have been her home, and wondering, with an ache of grief worse than her terror of the ruffians, what had become of the gentle housemate who had never before failed to take her part.

"Now men, listen to me one minute," exclaimed Dick Yates.

"We're not here to listen," ruled the leader.

"These boys ought to be put out," one man insisted. "We don't want them."

"Let my cousin's property be restored to her," spoke Pedro Lorimer, "without delay."

"And who are you?" demanded Yates, the beauty of his rosy youth, which had been felt rather than seen, changing suddenly to the power of a man with irresistible magnetism. His voice rolled out across the wall of rough faces. His eyes had scathing lights. His unwilling listeners raised their lanterns to look at him. "I have been gathering facts about you for more than a year. You are a New Orleans gambler. You ply your trade

## Spanish Peggy

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under cover of some political scheme about Cuba, a place you never saw. All you want of the poor young girl sitting on the horse beside you, is the handful of money her father contrived to hide from you. You think it is a very large sum. It is about two thousand dollars. If it hadn't been for poor old Shickshack you would have robbed her long ago. You paid Shickshack's half crazy, avaricious wife to send you word where he could be found, every time he moved to get rid of you.

"These men wouldn't send a child as helpless as one of their own sisters with you, if they knew you. You play the grandee before them. And in the West we always have backed a man up in taking his own when his rights were denied. But the only right you have in this community is to be dipped in the Sangamon!"

Lincoln, who had seen a knife thrown at Antywine's head for fewer words, kept his eye guarding the indistinct movements of the Spaniard. An uneasy tremor ran around what had been a dead wall of antagonism. But unfortunately Mahala Cameron's father now lifted his voice from the background, and in the character of minister exhorted Redmond Clary to draw his followers homeward and cease abetting the ungodly. Redmond Clary turned on him and told him to go home himself, or he might be neatly laid beside his daddy in the Concord burying-ground.

One word had swiftly followed another while Lincoln gauged the force drawn around him. His hair was rumpled over the arch of his head. His strong nose and clean-



ANN RUTLEDGE'S GRAVE

At Oakland Cemetery, near Peterborough, Illinois





## Spanish Peggy

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cut neck and the outward curving of his lips showed by fitful light above his shorter companions. Some radiation from his personality made one of the men exclaim :

"Abe, we know you're honest. But if you're too stubborn to hand over that money we've got a barrel at the mill all ready to roll you into the river."

"Wait!" said Lincoln, stretching out a long finger.

Pedro Lorimer hissed at him: "I do not wait while boys practice speeches! I could myself in return call my enemies names. This is not what was promised me."

"What Red Clary promised you," stated Lincoln with intuition which amounted to knowledge, "was if you would cancel his gambling debts he would make me hand over the little Spaniard's money."

Redmond Clary flung himself off his horse and ran at his accuser. The time for words was past. If the figure towering above them all had stood with less assurance, the raging leader might have led his mob to a cruel murder. But Lincoln's humorous eye spread a contagion of smiles as he caught the bull-bodied champion of the Grove by the collar and flung that muscular bulk across the ring to cool.

There was to be a fight. The men drew deep inhalations of enjoyment. For ever since Abraham Lincoln appeared in New Salem they had wanted to see him matched with Red Clary. Lincoln knew he was about to succeed or fail with the only argument which could move those to whom might was right. Eloquent and

## Spanish Peggy

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convincing words had to be backed by a man who could master his listeners. He was tired and supperless. The Spanish girl leaned down on her horse's neck, unconsciously uttering prayers aloud for her champion. The struggle would be over in a few minutes, but if Red Clary whipped him her future lay in unknown and terrible places. That Antywine was missing seemed a token that the worst must be in store for her. She was in the grip of an evil force.

Both men threw off their roundabouts and vests. Lincoln faced his two companions, making them a screen, and hurriedly unfastened the belt of gold which he wore under his shirt, and put it in his hat. This he gave to Slicky Green, who held it, while Yates stood guard.

"You were cut out for a banker, Slicky," said Lincoln. "I wasn't. I might burst the snakeskin and spill the money."

His opponent rushed at him like a mastiff let loose, and Peggy doubled herself lower upon the horse's neck. She heard the impact of blows, which sent shudder after shudder down her body, and the panting of spent breath. The Grove boys set up a yell, and she stuffed the horse's mane into her ears. The big, muscular bully who had made everybody in the Sangamon country afraid of him, and shaped public opinion for the Grove, was taking some cruel advantage of a clean wrestler, unused to sledge-hammer brutality. Then a hush penetrated even the horsehair, and Peggy looked as Lincoln knocked Red Clary flat beneath the chin of a startled

## Spanish Peggy

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animal. He fell against its hoofs, and being pulled into the clear space by one of his friends, lay still.

"I reckon," said Lincoln, pulling his own shirt collar wider open, and sitting on the chest of drawers to breathe, "he has the wind knocked out of him."

"Goody!" Peggy's own cry of thanksgiving was the first sound heard by the vanquished man. He sat up, blinking at those who had seen him humbled.

Lincoln bent over until his body described a right angle, and shook one long horizontal arm at the unimpaneled jury who would have to render verdict in this first case which Yates and he had associated themselves to win.

"A boy," he panted, "is like a white dress: soil him, and he can be washed and made clean again. But a girl is like a glass bottle: if you let her fall, or throw her down and break her, she is broken forever. Now, men, are you determined to have this poor little bottle destroyed?"

There is often speech where no language is heard; and Pedro Lorimer knew he stood by himself from that instant.

He spurred his horse toward Slicky to seize the hat and break away with it. But Antywine darted out of the cabin and across the open space like a stroke of light, intercepting the Spaniard. His eyes large with fever, and his high features impassioned, he had almost the beauty of an apparition. As the two encountered, Antywine seized the horse's bits and jerked it to its haunches. He and Pedro Lorimer stared at each other. Before the

## Spanish Peggy

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rider found his balance again Lincoln asked with whimsical significance:

“Boys, how would any of you like to get up out of chill-and-fever, and find all Clary’s Grove helping a stranger rob you of your own dear gal?”

A sympathetic and sheepish grin seemed to relax as much as could be seen of every rude face; and Pedro Lorimer, throwing away caution, spurred over Antywine. The boy fell, and leaped up, understanding it was a struggle for Peggy. A whirlpool of shouts and plunging horses, and men scrambling to mount, drove all watchers back. Even Redmond Clary’s voice was heard, denouncing the man whose part he had taken. The crowd that had come down New Salem Street seeking Lincoln went back driving Pedro Lorimer.

Horried as New Salem people were by threatened violence, they were unable to refrain from cheering. They crowded to the chest of drawers, where, left stranded as by a stormy tide, sat Peggy and Antywine. He held the hat and snakeskin which Slicky Green thrust into his keeping before following the ebb. The pair clung together, hearkening to no voices but their own, as two robins escaping from some peril of man, might have felicitated and comforted each other. The air was fresh like the breath of the sea after a hot land breeze has gone by.

Mounted all three upon the horse from which Lincoln had flung Peggy to Antywine, Lincoln and Yates, and Slicky filling its back from mane to tail, made the





“ — AND LOOK OUT FEARFULLY FOR A DREADED FACE ”

## Spanish Peggy

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best haste they could to the Sangamon. They stood at the top of the terraced bank while Pedro Lorimer was rolled down in a barrel.

Three times, tradition has it, the unhappy wretch took his plunge, and came bobbing up like a buoy. Then Lincoln and Yates, and the cooling effect of the water on those who had him to pull out, succeeded in moderating popular rage against him. He was turned loose, and his horse whipped in the direction of Springfield, with emphatic assurance that the barrel would be kept for him, and if he ever came back would be put to its final use as his floating coffin.

Don Pedro Lorimer was never seen again in that country. When Peggy and Antywine were married, and keeping house in their own cabin, she used sometimes to part her white curtains at night, and look out fearfully for a dreaded face. But happiness and security become a habit, and she loved after a while to tell her own story.

Years later the two who had steered her destiny—Abraham Lincoln and Richard Yates—began to steer the destinies of a nation and a state, and the Spaniard of New Salem grew to experience the grateful awe of a person who has been visited unawares by strong angels.





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